

Message Text

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S E C R E T SECTION 1 OF 2 RANGOON 0218

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1
TAGS: SNAR, BM, TH
SUBJECT: NARCOTICS VISIT: MEETING WITH BURMESE OFFICIALS

BEGIN SUMMARY: DURING THE CALL BY WHITE HOUSE ADVISOR O'KEEFE, SENIOR ADVISOR FALCO AND DEPUTY ASSISTANT SECRETARY OAKLEY ON COL. SEIN LWIN, CHIEF OF THE GUB NARCOTICS CONTROL BOARD, TWO MAJOR AREAS OF CONCERN TO U.S. INTERNATIONAL NARCOTICS CONTROL ACTIVITIES WERE RAISED. MS. FALCO AND DEPUTY ASSISTANT SECRETARY OAKLEY INDICATED THE U.S. PERCEPTION OF AN INCREASED THAI COMMITMENT TO NARCOTICS SUPPRESSION ACTIVITIES. WHILE HE APPEARED SKEPTICAL OF ANY CHANGE, COL. SEIN LWIN RESPONDED TO THE REPORT THAT THE THAI BORDER PATROL POLICE HAVE BEEN PUT UNDER THE SUPREME COMMAND AND THAT GENERAL POEM IS DEPUTY MINISTER OF INTERIOR BY CALLING IT A "GOOD IDEA". IN REPLY TO MS. FALCO'S OUTLINE OF THE SUCCESS THE MEXICAN GOVERNMENT HAS HAD IN USING HERBICIDES FOR POPPY CROP DESTRUCTION, COL. SEIN LWIN INDICATED THAT THE GUB DOES NOT WISH TO ALIENATE THOSE PEOPLE OF THE SHAN STATE WHOSE ONLY CURRENT MEANS OF LIVELIHOOD IS GROWING OPIUM. IN LATER CONVERSATION, TOP GUB OFFICIALS SAID THAT THEY ARE PLEASED AT NEW THAI GOVT. AND HOPEFUL IT WILL TAKE MORE VIGOROUS ANTI-NARCOTICS ACTIONS BUT ARE NOT YET READY TO ENGAGE IN JOINT OPERATIONS. THEY INTEND TO WATCH HOW KRIANGSAK PROCEEDS TO TAKE
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CONTROL OF SECURITY FORCES, ESPECIALLY THE BPP. END SUMMARY.

1. THE VISITING NARCOTICS OFFICIALS GROUP HEADED BY WHITE HOUSE ADVISOR CHARLES O'KEEFE, SENIOR ADVISOR TO THE SECRETARY OF INTERNATIONAL NARCOTICS MATTERS MATHEA FALCO AND DEPUTY ASSISTANT SECRETARY ROBERT B. OAKLEY MET WITH COL. SEIN LWIN, CHIEF OF THE GUB NARCOTICS CONTROL BOARD (AND CONCURRENTLY

MINISTER FOR HOME AND RELIGIOUS AFFAIRS AND MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT AND COMMUNICATIONS), FOR ONE HOUR ON JANUARY 18. THE GROUP WAS ACCOMPANIED BY THE AMBASSADOR AND DCM; U SHWE THAN, CHIEF OF THE PEOPLE'S POLICE FORCE ALSO ATTENDED FROM THE BURMSES SIDE.

2. DURING THE COURSE OF THE MEETING THE MAJOR SUBJECTS DISCUSSED WERE: (1) BURMESE GOVERNMENT NARCOTICS SUPPRESSION ACTIVITIES; (2) U.S. APPRECIATION FOR THESE ACTIONS; (3) HEROIN ADDICTION PROBLEM FOR THE U.S., BURMA, AND OTHER COUNTRIES; (4) THAI GOVERNMENT NARCOTICS SUPPRESSION ACTIVITIES; (5) THE USE OF HERBICIDES IN CROP DESTRUCTION; (6) U.N. NARCOTICS CONTROL EFFORTS.

3. COL. SEIN LWIN OUTLINED THE HISTORY OF NARCOTICS SUPPRESSION IN BURMA BEGINNING WITH THE BRITISH POLICY OF PERMITTING OPIUM PRODUCTION IN THE SHAN STATE AND LICENSING OF OPIUM-EATERS. HE POINTEDLY NOTED THAT THIS SYSTEM WAS ELIMINATED DURING THE FIRST NE WIN CARETAKER GOVERNMENT IN 1958. AS A MILITARY OFFICER IN THE SHAN STATE AT THAT TIME HE PERSONALLY CONDUCTED POPPY CROP DESTRUCTION ACTIVITIES. THE MINISTER INDICATED THAT THE NARCOTICS PROBLEM DEVELOPED AS A RESULT OF INSURGENT ACTIVITIES IN THE SHAN STATE AND REPEATED SEVERAL TIMES THAT IF THERE WERE NO INSURGENTS IN BURMA THERE WOULD BE NO NARCOTICS PROBLEM. AT THE END OF THE MEETING A SHORT WRITTEN SUMMARY OF GUB EFFORTS WAS GIVEN TO THE GROUP.

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4. MS. FALCO EXPRESSED THE APPRECIATION OF THE U.S. GOVERNMENT FOR THE EFFECTIVE NARCOTICS SUPPRESSION ACTIVITIES OF THE GUB SEVERAL TIMES DURING THE MEETING. WITHOUT RESPONDING DIRECTLY, COL. SEIN LWIN DETAILED VARIOUS ASPECTS OF THE GUB PROGRAM, INCLUDING AN EXTENSIVE EDUCATIONAL AND PREVENTATIVE CAMPAIGN RECENTLY LAUNCHED. MS. FALCO AND MR. OAKLEY INDICATED THAT THE U.S. COULD LEARN FROM THIS.

5. AFTER STATING THAT IN BURMA HEROIN ADDICTION MOSTLY AFFECTS THE UPPER AND LOWER CLASSES (THE SONS AND DAUGHTERS OF THE ELITE AND WORKING CLASS YOUTH), COL. SEIN LWIN ASKED ABOUT THE SITUATION IN THE UNITED STATES. MS. FALCO'S RESPONSE--THAT HEROIN ADDICTION AFFECTS ALL CLASSES IN AMERICA--PROMPTED COL. SEIN LWIN TO ASK WHY THAT IS SO. MS. FALCO INDICATED THAT IF WE KNEW THE ANSWER TO THAT QUESTION WE COULD SOLVE THE PROBLEM, AND THAT HEROIN AVAILABILITY INDUCED MANY NEW USERS. COL. SEIN LWIN AGREED AND STATED THAT WITHOUT CONSUMERS THERE WOULD BE NO PRODUCERS OF OPIUM, AND REITERATED HIS BELIEF IN THE VALUE OF EDUCATION AND PREVENTATIVE PROGRAMS.

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6. MS. FALCO AND MR. OAKLEY REFERRED TO THEIR RECENT VISIT TO THAILAND, REPORTED THE U.S. PERCEPTION OF A GREATER COMMITMENT BY THE NEW THAI GOVERNMENT TO NARCOTICS SUPPRESSION ACTIVITIES, AND SAID THAT GENERAL KRIANGSAK HAD EXPLICITLY STATED HIS DESIRE TO WORK MORE CLOSELY WITH BURMA. HE HAD ASKED THAT THE MESSAGE BE CONVEYED TO THE GUB. COL. SEIN LWIN AND U SHWE THAN RESPONDED BY SAYING THAT ALTHOUGH THEY ARE INTERESTED IN WHAT THE THAIS ARE SAYING, THE BURMESE GOVERNMENT IS TAKING SPECIFIC ACTIONS, NOT JUST TALKING. COL. SEIN LWIN MADE THE POINT THAT IN BURMA ANTI-NARCOTICS ACTIONS ARE UNDER CENTRAL CONTROL, SINCE AT THE LOCAL LEVEL THERE IS TOO MUCH RISK OF PENETRATION OR PRESSURE FROM NARCOTICS TRAFFICKERS. MR. OAKLEY AGREED THAT THIS IS A GOOD POLICY AND REPORTED THAT IN THAILAND THE BORDER PATROL POLICE HAVE RECENTLY BEEN PLACED UNDER THE THAI SUPREME COMMAND AND THE NEW DEPUTY MINISTER OF INTERIOR, GENERAL POEM, IS ONE OF THAILAND'S TOUGHEST GENERALS. GREATER BPP-ARMY COOPERATION SEEMS LIKELY. COL. SEIN LWIN REACTED TO THAT INFORMATION BY REPEATING "GOOD IDEA" IN ENGLISH SEVERAL TIMES. OAKLEY OBSERVED THAT IMPROVED THAI RELATIONS WITH THE INDOCHINA STATES SINCE KRIANGSAK TOOK OFFICE HAVE REDUCED THE SENSE OF OUTSIDE THREATS, THUS MAKING IT SOMEWHAT EASIER FOR THE THAI TO TAKE ACTIONS AGAINST GROUPS TRADITIONALLY SEEN AS BUFFERS AGAINST EXTERNAL THREATS. THE MINISTER SAID THAI FOREIGN POLICY WAS
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STRICTLY ITS OWN AFFAIR.

7. NOTING THAT THE ONLY TWO COUNTRIES IN THE WORLD USING MILITARY AND PARA-MILITARY FORCES IN OPIUM GROWING AREAS AGAINST NARCOTICS TRAFFICKERS ARE BURMA AND MEXICO, MS. FALCO OUTLINED THE SUCCESS THE MEXICAN GOVERNMENT HAS HAD IN USING HERBICIDES FOR POPPY CROP DESTRUCTION. SHE INDICATED HER UNDERSTANDING THAT THE TERRAIN AND INACCESSABILITY OF OPIUM FIELDS IN THE TWO COUNTRIES WERE SIMILAR. WHILE AGREEING THAT THIS IS AN EFFECTIVE METHOD OF DESTROYING POPPY FIELDS, AND DISPLAYING DETAILED KNOWLEDGE OF IT, COL. SEIN LWIN STATED MEXICO IS NOT BURMA AND THERE ARE SEVERAL REASONS WHY THE BURMESE GOVERNMENT HAS NOT ADOPTED THIS METHOD. HE SAID THAT IT WOULD NOT BE POSSIBLE TO EXPLAIN TO THE PEASANTS THE EFFECTS OF THE HERBICIDES AND IT WOULD PANIC THEM INTO ALLEGIANCE TO THE INSURGENTS. HE EXPLAINED THE DIFFICULTIES EXPERIENCED IN EDUCATING FARMERS IN THE RANGOON AREA ABOUT THE BENEFICIAL USES OF INSECTICIDES. HE INDICATED ALSO THAT THE CHEMICAL MIGHT DESTROY OR AFFECT OTHER CROPS OR NEIGHBORING AREAS. HE ARGUED THAT IF THE BURMA ARMY WERE TO DESTROY THE ONLY CURRENT MEANS OF LIVELIHOOD FOR THOSE PEOPLE OF THE SHAN STATE DEPENDENT ON OPIUM PRODUCTION, THEY WOULD ONLY HATE THE GOVERNMENT.

8. MS. FALCO INDICATED THAT SHE WILL BE ATTENDING THE ANNUAL MEETING OF UNITED NATIONS COMMISSION ON NARCOTICS DRUGS AND HOPED THAT BURMA WILL SEND AN OBSERVER. SHE NOTED THAT THE BURMESE DELEGATION MADE A CONTRIBUTION DURING THE LAST U.N., GENERAL ASSEMBLY TO DISCUSSIONS OF INTERNATIONAL NARCOTICS CONTROL ACTIVITIES. MR. OAKLEY STATED THAT THE BURMESE AMBASSADOR IN WASHINGTON, U TIN LATT, DID A PARTICULARLY GOOD JOB AT THE U.N., AND EVEN HAD SOME SUCCESS IN CONVINCING CONGRESSMAN WOLFF OF THE BURMESE COMMITMENT TO NARCOTICS SUPPRESSION. U SHWE THAN INDICATED THAT THE BURMESE AMBASSADOR IN GENEVA WILL ATTEND THE MEETINGS. HE ALSO TOOK THE OCCASION TO EXPRESS HIS UNHAPPINESS OVER THE SLOW

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PACE OF IMPLEMENTATION OF THE UNFIDAC PROGRAM IN BURMA. MS. FALCO SAID SHE WOULD LOOK INTO THIS AT THE GENEVA MEETING.

9. MS. FALCO ALSO DISCUSSED THE CHANGES IN WORLD SOURCES OF HEROIN AS TURKEY PHASED OUT OF OPIUM PRODUCTION AND MEXICO BECAME THE PRIMARY SUPPLIER TO THE U.S. SHE NOTED THAT AVAILABILITY OF SOUTHEAST ASIAN HEROIN IS ON THE INCREASE IN THE U.S. AND GREATER EFFORTS WILL BE NEEDED IN THIS PART OF THE WORLD TO CONTINUE TO BE EFFECTIVE IN REDUCING OPIUM PRODUCTION AND NARCOTICS TRAFFICKING.

10. LATER IN THE DAY THERE WAS A LONG CONVERSATION BEFORE AND AFTER DINNER ON THAI-BURMESE NARCOTICS COOPERATION BETWEEN TOP BURMESE OFFICIALS AND AMBASSADOR BEAN, FALCO, OAKLEY AND O'KEEFE. THE BURMESE INCLUDED THE MINISTER OF HOME AND RELIGIOUS AFFAIRS, THE VICE CHIEF OF STAFF OF THE ARMY, THE HEAD OF BURMESE

NATIONAL INTELLIGENCE BUREAU AND COL. TIN OO. THE AMERICANS REPATED THE GENERAL REMARKS MADE EARLIER TO SEIN LWIN. THE BURMESE, SEPARATELY AND COLLECTIVELY, STATED THEIR GREAT SATISFACTION WITH GENERAL KIRANGSAK HAVING BECOME PRIME MINISTER AND HIS INITIAL EFFORTS AT REORGANIZING THE THAI NARCOTICS EFFORT. THEY ALSO STATED THEIR BELIEF THAT MUCH MORE WOULD NEED TO BE DONE BEFORE MIDDLE AND LOW-LEVEL THAI SECURITY PERSONNEL, PARTICULARLY THE BPP, COULD BE TRUSTED TO CARRY OUT STRONG ANTI-NARCOTICS EFFORTS. THEY SAID THE GUB IS CONTENT WITH ITS RELATIONS WITH THAILAND, THE USG NEED NOT WORRY ABOUT THIS, AND THE GUB WILL WAIT SEVRAL MONTHS TO SEE HOW KRIANGSAK SUCCEEDS IN GAINING CONTROL OF THE GOVERNMENTAL AND SECURITY APPARATUS.

11. ASKED WHAT THE RTG MIGHT DO TO GAIN GUB CONFIDENCE IN THE INTERIM BEFORE JOINT OPERATIONS MIGHT BE POSSIBLE, THE BURMESE REPLIED THAT ACTION SHOULD BE TAKEN AGAINST CHIANG CHI FU AND THE SUA, AS WELL AS POLITICAL EXILES RESIDENT IN THAILAND WHO ARE SUPPORTING BOMBINGS AND OTHER SUBVERSIVE ACTIONS IN BURMA. CHIANG CHI FU IS CLEARLY ESTABLISHED TO BE A MAJOR TRAFFICKER AND THE SUA IS DIRECTLY LINKED TO REFINING OPERATIONSON THE BURMESE SIDE AND
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TRAFFICKING ON THE THAI SIDE. YET THE SUA AND CHIANG CHI FU OPERATE FREELY IN THAILAND.
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